

Brookfield will operate the marina in partnership with Island Global Yachting, whose luxury marinas are in the Caribbean, Mexico, Montauk, Newport, the Bahamas, Colombia and Panama.

Dozens of Fortenbaugh's supporters crowded into the boardroom while many more watched the proceedings from just outside. Some booed as authority Chairman Dennis Mehiel gave a lengthy reasoning for the board's decision.

See excerpts in video below with responses by Fortenbaugh.

"All I can say to all the concerned members of the community is to understand our responsibilities," Mehiel said before the vote. "You guys are a very critical stakeholder in the decisions we make. But at the end of the day, we have to do what we think is the right thing to do."

Mehiel tried to assure the crowd that the changes approved by the authority will result in "wider, not narrower, community use and access to the marina."

Brookfield has pledged to invest \$450,000 for marina improvements, including more lighting and public seating, as well as continue to offer a sailing school and a summer camp program.

Noting that the authority "does not ignore incumbency," Mehiel said that Fortenbaugh's application had some "deficiencies." And during a second round of interviews, when Fortenbaugh met with the authority's staff to discuss his bid, "the dialogue with the incumbent operator did not improve his standing in the relative competitive process," he added, without elaboration.

"Sorry the authority didn't view our operations as good enough to continue here," a dejected Fortenbaugh said after the vote. "We were here for 9/11...and helped the community when everyone else was leaving. To say we're not good enough now is a little hard to hear."

Last month, Community Board 1 passed a resolution asking the authority to scrap its request for proposals in order to include community feedback in the process. Elected officials followed suit, signing a letter to Mehiel requesting a new selection process.

Without mentioning Fortenbaugh by name, Mehiel said at the meeting that "an individual bidder" decided "to mount political pressure on the authority to subvert our process and preserve his economic interest in the operation of the marina." The remark was followed by jeers from Fortenbaugh's supporters. Fortenbaugh insisted that this was not true.

"[Mehiel is] saying I caused all this reaction," he said. "I don't think I did. I think the authority is the one that never reached out to the public about this."

Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer, who had sent a letter to Mehiel in December asking him to require the winning bidder to give community-based operators "the maximum possible chance to stay at North Cove Marina," voiced her support for Fortenbaugh.

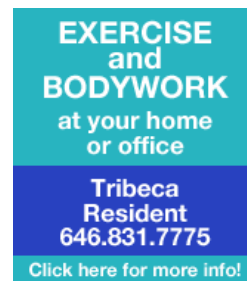
"It's a shame," Brewer told the Trib after the meeting. "I'm a big fan of what Michael's done to bring the community sailing school here. I've known him for years and feel very badly about this. We'll try to reevaluate



Battery Park City Authority chairman Dennis Mehiel defends the authority's selection of Brookfield Office Properties to operate the North Cove Marina. Photo: Carl Glassman/Tribeca Trib



Following the vote by the Battery Park City Authority, Fortenbaugh talks to the press and supporters. Photo: Carl Glassman/Tribeca Trib



and see if there's anything else we can do."

In a letter, Brewer, along with Rep. Jerrold Nadler, State Senator Daniel Squadron and Councilwoman Margaret Chin, asked Gov. Andrew Cuomo to urge the authority to make local residents the majority of the board.

The only Battery Park City resident on the board, Martha Gallo, recused herself. Her family has a slip in the marina and contributes to the New York Harbor Sailing Foundation. (The vote was originally supposed to take place in December, but Gallo's recusal then left the board without a quorum, prompting the directors to postpone that action until January.) But if Gallo had voted, she told the Trib, she would have supported the BPCA's decision.

"Now that I have seen all the situation and the criteria I think I would have supported the authority," she said. "I'm an optimistic person. Brookfield and IGY and Michael are going to have opportunities to do things together on the waterfront in the future."

Prior to the meeting, reporting by Matthew Fenton of the Broadsheet revealed the use of Island Global Yachting docks for Mehiel's own yacht, drawing attention to a possible conflict of interest for the chairman and the need for him, like Gallo, to recuse himself from the vote.

Mehiel called that suggestion "preposterous."

"There is a high likelihood that our boat was stopped at an IGY marina at some point, dropped an anchor in the water and may or may not have fueled," Mehiel said, adding that his yacht docks in the Caribbean in the winter and in Greece during the summer. "Where that happened, I don't select those marinas, [or] have any knowledge, either contemporaneously or later, of where they stopped or what they bought."

Gallo said she agreed with Mehiel in his decision not to recuse himself.

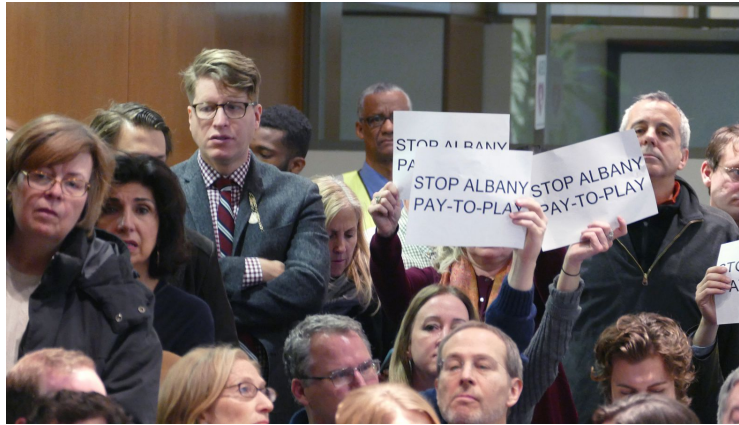
"[My] recusal had more to do with the length and the intensity of the relationship with the club and with Michael and his family," she said. "That is very different from the commercial relationship that Dennis had."

Fortenbaugh has already planned his next move—he has taken over operation of Liberty Harbor Marina in Jersey City, and will open the season on April 18.

"We're going to sail. It's just a question of how many members will stay with us," he said.

But it was an emotional decision for the longtime Battery Park City resident who is well known for his community involvement.

"We had no choice," he said, fighting back tears. "I'd said I'd never leave Battery Park City."



Fortenbaugh supporters watch the board proceedings, some holding signs suggesting that political influence figured in its selection of a marina operator. Mehiel denied that there had been any discussion about the marina with political figures in Albany. Photo: Carl Glassman/Tribeca Trib



The Battery Park City board of directors meets Jan. 22. Teleconferencing from Florida is vice chair Donald Capoccia. Photo: Carl Glassman/Tribeca Trib

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'Include all facts about the controversial decision'

Submitted by admin on Fri, 02/13/2015 - 12:12pm.

To the Editor:

Your article about the Battery Park City Authority awarding of the North Cove Marina operation from long time operator Michael Fortenbaugh to Brookfield Office Properties had some glaring, and puzzling, omissions.

Fortenbaugh over the years has operated the Marina free of scandal and problem free. In addition to the berthing of yachts, he operated both an adult sailing school, and during the summer months a school to teach children sailing. His bid for renewal had wide support from our local [officials].

As reported in detail in a NY Times article of October 14, 2010, now Governor, and then HUD Secretary Andrew Cuomo was involved in an action involving Mr. Farkas's company and alleged landlord kickbacks. Farkas maintained his company, Insignia Financial Group, did nothing illegal as it was accepted industry practice. Mr. Cuomo resolved the action and Insignia sold its apartment business for over 900 million dollars. As reported, "And three years later, he began a friendship with Mr. Farkas, astonishing Insignia's workers who had lived through the battle. That relationship proved hugely beneficial to both men. Mr. Cuomo received hundreds of thousands of dollars for his campaigns, and, in a three-year stretch between political races, a job working for Mr. Farkas that paid him more than \$2.5 million".

A similar article in CRAINS NEW YORK of January 22, 2015, outlines the amounts of money both contributed by Farkas, and the employment of Andrew Cuomo between political elections. As member of his 2014 Gubernatorial election campaign, Mr. Farkas and the "finance team" were signaled out for praise in Cuomo's 2015 inauguration speech.

We should also note the seven member Battery Park City Authority, which favored Brookfield's bid, with two seats vacant, has five voting members of which four were appointed by Cuomo.

Now it gets interesting: after Brookfield, also a contributor to Gov. Cuomo's campaign, was appointed operator of NCM, they established an operating relationship with Island Global Yachting - founded by Andrew Farkas.

In fairness to all there is not a hint of illegality that should stain Cuomo, Farkas, or Brookfield, and none is now suggested.

The fact remains, however, that the respected Mr. Fortenbaugh is voted out and Cuomo campaign contributor Brookfield is voted in by a BPCA voting Board almost in totality appointed by Cuomo; then Brookfield establishes a co-operating relationship with a former employer, campaign contributor and recent campaign associate in Mr. Farkas.

Again, nothing illegal is suggested or implied, but should not the Governor exercise better judgment, especially since he has the national political scene in his rear view mirror, then to get involved with something that suggests cronism? And should not the Tribeca Tribune exercise true journalistic reporting and include all facts relative to a controversial decision. Your omissions are glaring and beg the question why so?

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Wide Support for North Cove Marina Operator to Stay



It was standing room only in the Battery Park City Library on Thursday, Jan. 8, when supporters of Michael Fortenbaugh gathered in an effort to convince the Battery Park City Authority and Gov. Andrew Cuomo that Fortenbaugh should be retained as the North Cove Marina operator. Photo: Carl Glassman/Tribeca Trib

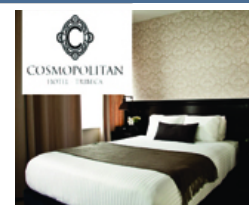
By **AMANDA WOODS**

Posted Jan. 02, 2015

With the Battery Park City Authority expected this month to announce the next operator of the North Cove Marina, local elected officials, Community Board 1 and supporters of the popular current operator, Michael Fortenbaugh, are calling for a restart of the selection process.

The officials—Rep. Jerrold Nadler, Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer, State Sen. Daniel Squadron, Councilwoman Margaret Chin and Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver—are jointly urging the authority to enlist community input in the process, a request made last month in a Community Board 1 resolution.

The call for a reworked request for proposals comes amid a mounting show of support for Fortenbaugh, a Battery Park City resident whose 10-year contract as marina operator ended on Dec. 31. He has run a sailing club and sailing school at the marina since 1994.



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Fortenbaugh and his supporters fear he will lose out in the bidding process to more powerful competition. It has been reported that Brookfield Properties, which runs the World Financial Center, may be favored by the authority to win the lease in partnership with Island Global Yachting, headed by Andrew Farkas, a billionaire real estate investor with close ties to Gov. Andrew Cuomo. The authority said it postponed the vote on an operator last month because it lacked a quorum.

This month, Ted Wallace, the former dock master of the Chelsea Sailing School at Chelsea Piers, took over as the authority's newly hired director of marina operations. It is a post that Robin Forst, the authority's spokeswoman, termed "interim."



Michael Fortenbaugh, who was selected by the Battery Park City Authority in 2004 to operate the North Cove Marina.

On Thursday, Jan. 8, Fortenbaugh supporters, many of them members of his Manhattan Yacht Club, packed into the second floor of the Battery Park City Library, and one after another testified to what they see as the success of the marina under Fortenbaugh's stewardship. The gathering was called by Jenifer Rajkumar, the Democratic District Leader for Battery Park City. (See video below.)

Fortenbaugh supporters also made their voices heard at Community Board 1's December general meeting. Without explicitly endorsing Fortenbaugh, the board took a strong stand, passing a resolution asking the authority to scrap its request for proposals for an operator and create a new one that would give the community a role in the decision.

Battery Park City Committee chair Anthony Notaro called the current request for proposals "flawed" because only 15 percent of the criteria includes demonstrated "quality and strength" of the kind of community programming that Fortenbaugh has been providing.

"They so diminish the value of that so that anyone with a large checkbook could come in and answer the [proposal request] and potentially be a competitor," he said. "At a bare minimum, we need that to be the number one criterion."

"Gaining community input should be a requirement and a priority," he added.

Asked by the Trib to respond to CB1's resolution and its call for more community input, the authority issued a statement, in which it said that "the Authority is required to select an operator through a competitive bid process..." and that "the bids requested by the authority require operators to continue the ongoing operation of a sailing school at a reasonable cost to users as well as enhanced programming and opportunities for greater access to the waterfront."

But in addressing the community board, Fortenbaugh called the authority "secretive" in its handling of the selection process. "Suddenly we find ourselves unsure of where we are," he said, adding, "We're just asking for an open process."



At the December meeting of Community Board 1, speakers line up to express their support for Michael Fortenbaugh and his continuation as the operator of the North Cove Marina. At the microphone is Kiera Galloway, who took lessons at Manhattan Sailing School as a high school freshman. Photo: Amanda Woods/Tribeca Trib

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New BPCA Chief

The Battery Park City Authority has a new president. One month after Gayle Horwitz resigned from the post, Authority chairman Dennis Mehiel announced the appointment of Demetrios A. Boutris, 51, a California-based business consultant and real estate investor who, according to a statement from the Authority, is giving up his business interests to take the job.

Boutris, a lawyer, will also serve as the Authority's Chief Operating Officer.

Mehiel made the announcement at a meeting Tuesday of the Authority's board, where Boutris sat beside him at the head of the conference table but did not speak.

Asked after the meeting about his familiarity with Battery Park City, he said, "I've walked it maybe 20 times."

Boutris, who lives in Sacramento and Los Angeles, said he has been splitting his time between the West Coast and New York, where his wife, Aurelia Mika Chang, a concert pianist, and their two sons live on the Upper West Side. "As of tonight I'm here," he said.

Boutris has headed California's investment and financing authority and served as a counsel to former California Gov. Gray Davis and U.S. Trade Representative Mickey Kantor in the Clinton administration.



Demetrios A. Boutris with Chairman Dennis Mehiel at the Battery Park City Authority's Oct. 23 board meeting. Photo by Carl Glassman / Tribeca Trib

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Two Events Highlight Frustration Over BPC Center Delay



PHOTOS BY CARL GLASSMAN/TRIBECA TRIB

Battery Park City's \$55 million community center, operated by Asphalt Green, was slated to open a year ago.

By JESSICA TERRELL

Two groups, frustrated and angry over the Battery Park City Authority's handling of the long-delayed and now-completed BPC community center, to be operated by Asphalt Green, have at least one thing they can agree on. They want the \$55 million facility to open.

Under what terms is another matter.

"We want Asphalt Green to run it, and we say 'enough politics, open the doors to our community center,'" Jamie Propp, the organizer of an event on Sunday in support of Asphalt Green opening immediately, told a gathering on the terrace of the Battery Park City ball fields

"This community center has been nine or 10 years in the making, what's a few more weeks or a few more months to get it right?" Marshal Coleman, former board member of the Downtown Little League, said at a rally on Thursday that is calling on the Authority to change Asphalt Green's contract or bring in another operator.

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